

HOUSE BILL 2609

By Campbell

AN ACT to name a bridge on State Route 126 in Sullivan County in honor of the late Richard Lee Edwards, Sr.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor those members of America's greatest generation who bravely served in combat during World War II; and

WHEREAS, no Tennessean is more deserving of this honor than the late Private First Class, Richard Lee Edwards, Sr., United States Army; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Edwards entered into active service with the United States Army on December 28, 1943, at the age of eighteen, and subsequently served as a paratrooper with the 101st Airborne during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Edwards was captured by enemy forces during the Battle of the Bulge and thus became a prisoner of war in a German prison camp for a period of time; and

WHEREAS, he was discharged from the U.S. Army on December 25, 1945, having earned a Good Conduct Medal, American Theatre Ribbon, European African Middle Eastern Theatre Ribbon, Parachutist Badge, World War II Victory Ribbon, and Combat Infantry Badge; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Edwards returned home to live in Sullivan County for most of the next fifty-five years and worked as a truck driver for Associated Transport before taking a much deserved retirement; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Edwards passed away on January 31, 2011, at the age of eighty-five after having lived an exemplary life filled with purpose and conviction; and

WHEREAS, the Sullivan County Board of Commissioners has petitioned this General Assembly to name a bridge in Mr. Edwards' honor to commemorate his courageous service to his fellow Americans during World War II; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, Bridge No. 82-126-1752 on State Route 126 in Sullivan County is hereby designated the "Richard Lee Edwards, Sr. Memorial Bridge" as a lasting tribute to an outstanding soldier and citizen.

SECTION 2. The department of transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the bridge described in Section 1 as the "Richard Lee Edwards, Sr. Memorial Bridge".

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall become operative only if the cost of the manufacture and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within one (1) year of the effective date of this act. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture or installation of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such signs within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.